ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

Annual Subscription: $3.00

17, ROUTE DE MALAGNOU, GENEVA
297 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 10

Printed in the U. S. A.

Tel.: GRamercy 5-3475 — Cable Address: "Worcil"

under the auspices of
the WORLD COUNCIL of CHURCHES (in process of formation)
the INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

HOLBROOK LIBRARY
PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 17 Fourteenth Year May 2, 1947

World Council and Missionary Council

At Madras (1938) and at Saint-Germain (1939) the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches set up a Joint Committee of which Dr John R. Mott is the Chairman. Two meetings of that Committee have been held, one at Geneva in February 1946, the other at Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania (U.S.A.) 16 - 18 April 1947. The Committee is advisory only and its resolutions are subject to confirmation by the two organisations, but it has proved itself to be an indispensable instrument in "the process of drawing progressively closer together" these two ecumenical bodies. This has become so evident that one of the principal recommendations of the Buck Hill Falls meeting was that "in the further working out of principles and policies affecting coordination and common action there should be a joint committee which should be consultative and not administrative in character except for such specific tasks as the two bodies may assign to it."

Through the recommendation of a sub-committee on Relationships, of which Dr S.M. Cavert was Chairman, an action was adopted which emphasised that the association of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches "is a process, not a single event in the field of organisation"; that "the interdependence of these two organisations is as vital as their autonomy". "Structural integration is not deemed to be immediately desirable, but what is needed is further effective cooperation in close association. They are complementary ecumenical councils." In recognition of their identity of purpose and concern for the evangelisation of the world, it wasproposed that "the principle of interdependence should find acknowledgment in the mutual use of the following titles:

The International Missionary Council in Association with the World Council of Churches - and The World Council of Churches in Association with the International Missionary Council.

It is recognised that this recommendation cannot become effective until approved by the Committee of the International Missionary Council, which will meet at Whitby (Canada) in July 1947, and by the Assembly of the World Council of Churches, which will meet at Amsterdam in 1948."

World Council and Missionary Council

At Madras (1938) and at Saint-Germain (1939) the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches set up a joint Committee of which Dr. John R. Mott is the Chairman. Two meetings of that Committee have been held, one at Geneva in February 1946, the other at Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania (U.S.A.) in - 30 April 1947. The Committee is advisory only and its resolutions are subject to confirmation by the two organizations, but it has proved itself to be an indispensable instrument in "the process of drawing progressively closer together" these two ecumenical bodies. This has become so evident that one of the principal recommendations of the Buck Hill Falls meeting was that "in the further working out of principles and policies affecting coordination and common action there should be a joint committee which should be consultative and not administrative in character except for such specific tasks as the two bodies may assign to it."

Through the recommendation of a sub-committee on Relationships, of which Dr E.M. Dayott was Chairman, an action was adopted which emphasized that the association of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches "is a process, not a single event in the field of organization"; that "the interdependence of these two organizations is as vital as their autonomy". "Structural integration is not deemed to be immediately desirable, but what is needed is further effective cooperation in close association. They are complementary ecumenical councils." In recognition of their identity of purpose and concern for the evangelization of the world, it was proposed that "the principle of interdependence should find acknowledgement in the mutual use of the following titles:

The International Missionary Council in Association with the World Council of Churches - and The World Council of Churches in Association with the International Missionary Council.

It is recognized that this recommendation cannot become effective until approved by the Committee of the International Missionary Council, which will meet at Whitby (Canada) in July 1947, and by the Assembly of the World Council of Churches, which will meet at

The Joint Committee also dealt with the question of membership in the World Council of Churches of the Younger Churches. Dr F.F. Goodsell was the Chairman of this sub-committee. Further clarification was achieved of the criteria by which Churches become eligible for membership and a considerable number of Younger Churches were proposed for such membership.

A third sub-committee, under the chairmanship of Dr A. Koechlin, brought forward important proposals, which were adopted, having to do with cooperative enterprises. The most significant and far reaching approved in principle a recommendation to the two bodies to establish a joint office in East Asia of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council, the need for which was originally expressed by the National Christian Councils of India and China. "The proposal is designed to help the Churches in East Asia to develop a sense of their interdependence, to provide them with an agency for pooling their experience, and for sharing both spiritual inspiration and practical technique, and to help them to participate fully in the life of the Ecumenical Church."

Other cooperative enterprises were endorsed which have to do with study and research, youth, reconstruction and inter-Church aid, international affairs.

Members of the Joint Committee were present from China, Korea, Mexico, India, the United States, Great Britain and other European countries. E.P.S. Geneva

United Witness on Whitsunday

For the seventh year in succession a united service of international Christian witness will be held in Westminster Abbey, London, on Whitsunday May 25, at 3 p.m. On the invitation of the Dean of Westminster, pastors and chaplains of continental and overseas Churches, with representatives of the British Churches, will take part in a procession of witnesss. The British Council of Churches has suggested to local councils of Churches that the holding of similar united services in provincial centres would be an appropriate act of fellowship on Whitsunday afternoon.

In Geneva, a service will be held in the Cathedral of Saint Pierre, at which Dr W.A. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, will preach. Pastor Wyler, of the Reformed Church of Geneva, Dr S. Michelfelder, of the Lutheran Church (U.S.A.), Rev. M. Thomas, of the Mar Thoma Church, Travancore (India), Dr A. Freudenberg, of the Lutheran Church of Germany, Rev. Eric M. Duncan, of the Church of Scotland, and Rev. Cecil Williams, of the Church of England, will take part.

The service in Geneva will be broadcast by the B.B.C. at 18.45 - 19.25 (Swiss time) = 7.45 - 8.25 p.m. (British Double summertime). E.P.S. Geneva

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/eni-bulletin_1947-05-02_14_17

A New Course at the Ecumenical Institute

Another course has started at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, near Geneva. Christian youth leaders from 20 countries, including such a distant country as South Africa, began their six weeks course on youth problems on April 23rd.

Unlike the previous two courses for laymen and theological students for which students were entirely selected by church agencies connected with the World Council, this session has had 20 of its 40 students selected by three other international Christian youth agencies, namely, the World's Y.W.C.A., the World Alliance of Y.M.C.A.s and the World's Student Christian Federation. Each Wednesday afternoon the youth leaders will go to Geneva to visit the headquarters of their respective sponsoring organisation in order to learn about its work.

Dr Walter M. Horton of Oberlin University, Oberlin (U.S.A.) will be one of the lecturers on Christian world movement. Under his leadership, the youth leaders will discuss a number of questions on the programme of the Oslo Conference. Prof. Emil Brunner of Switzerland will lecture on "The Christian Message". Among other lecturers are Dr M. Bovet of Switzerland on "Psychology of Youth", Prof. Spira of Germany on "Church, School and State", and Canon H. Herklots of Great Britain on "Programmes and Methods of Youth Work". A special symposium is planned on "Christianity, Socialism and Communism". Bible studies will be prominent in the course.

The purpose of the course is to give the students the opportunity to exchange experiences of methods and problems of Christian youth work, to reflect on their own experiences, to examine the relationship of their work to the general task of the Churches and of the ecumenical movement in these times, and, above all, to deepen their own understanding of the Christian faith and the Bible.

E.P.S. Geneva

Health Cure for Pastors Through the World Council of Churches

In order to meet the many requests received from different countries, the Reconstruction Department of the World Council of Churches has made arrangements for a health cure for sick pastors and church workers, whose health has suffered owing to the war and subsequent conditions. Wherever possible, the patients will be helped in their own countries through their own Reconstruction Committees and through provision of special food parcels and medicaments if necessary, from the Reconstruction Department. Other cases, recommended by the competent Reconstruction Committee, will be taken care of by the Health Committee of the Reconstruction Department in Geneva. This Committee has been working under the leadership of the Rev. Göte Hedenquist, Swedish pastor, since the beginning of this year and some hundred requests are already being dealt with. Mr. Hedenquist states that almost all "giving" Churches are supplying this work financially. The Churches of Switzerland, Sweden and Denmark have also made great efforts to receive pastors, members of pastors' families and church

workers for a rest cure. Twenty tubercular pastors have been invited to Sweden for a year's cure in sanatoria. Other tubercular pastors and church workers have been, and are to be invited to Switzerland through the Health Committee, on the recommendation of the competent Church Reconstruction Committee.

Some hundreds of pastors, members of pastors' families and other church workers, who are not ill with tuberculosis, but who are in need for a rest cure in congenial surroundings, have already been invited to Switzerland and Sweden; Denmark will be receiving seventy of these pastors and teachers from different countries in August or September. The latter will also have the opportunity of meeting Scandinavian theological professors at a course to be held in September in a Folk High School in Denmark.

In order to facilitate the task of receiving pastors and church workers in Switzerland, the Health Committee of the Reconstruction Department, in cooperation with the Relief Committee of the Evangelical Churches in Switzerland, has bought the Hotel Aeberli at the Lago Maggiore, in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland. A rest home, now called "Casa Locarno" is to be opened here on July 1st, to accomodate thirty guests in need for a rest, who will thus be enabled to spend a month or six weeks in beautiful surroundings, with good food and in an ecumenical milieu. The Health Committee also sees a great ecumenical value in the bringing together of pastors from many different countries for short periods. In years to come this home may become self-supporting, the pastors paying their own expenses, and in this way "Casa Locarno" will become a new milestone in the ecumenical task. E.P.S. Geneva

NETHERLANDS

Youth in the Church

At the invitation of the "Young Church" in Holland and the Swiss Council of Church Youth, nearly 80 leaders and delegates of Church youth work in different countries met at Oosterbeek (Holland) from April 9 - 12, 1947. They came from the following countries: Hungary, Norway, Sweden, Scotland, Switzerland and Wales. The Conference passed the following resolutions:

"1.- Jesus Christ the Lord calls all humanity to His Church. In spite of the fact that many are turning away from the Church there are at present many new opportunities, as many young people are awakening to a new realisation of the Christian message. The fact that in many countries young people are joining Church youth groups is a proof that these opportunities are being taken up by the newly-awakened Churches. Some of them have had no previous connection with national or international youth organisations but many have been brought to the knowledge of the significance of the Church through the value of their work. Just as the visible communities are united in Christ there exists also a unity of youth across the frontiers of their various countries. It is important, therefore, to give expression to their unity, so as to enable Church youth to act and speak in unison regarding their special needs and possibilities.

"2.- This union is to comprise all those who commit themselves to the Church, even though they might have begun to build up international relations through other organisations.

"3.- Through this union the communities shall be strengthened and the unity of the Church shall be made more and more apparent to a world which is gradually turning away from God.

"4.- This unity of the Church youth of different countries shall be proclaimed through the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches and it is to be hoped that when its constitution is finally ratified the Churches will appoint representatives of their most active Youth Organisations on its staff.

"The representatives of the Church Youth Organisations know their special obligation of tackling the urgent problems of our time and are fully aware that their solution can only be expected with the help of the Churches."

The Swiss Council of Church Youth gave an invitation for a similar conference to meet in the Spring of 1948 and various practical plans for exchange of literature, invitations, etc. were discussed.

E.P.S. Geneva

DENMARK — A Tribute to the Late King Christian

The Rev. Henry Carter, Chairman of the Refugee Commission of the World Council of Churches, which held its last meeting in Copenhagen (see E.P.S.No.16) and the officers of the Commission were received by the late King Christian X. Mr. Carter, in an open letter to "The Times" (London, April 23, 1947) writes:

"The audience, probably the last accorded by his Majesty to foreign visitors, was marked by an incident which it seems appropriate to record in this time of grateful remembrance of the King's devotion to the common good. One of our four representatives was Propst Grüber (of Germany) who was liberated from Dachau concentration camp by the Allies and is now a member of the Berlin Town Council. As we awaited the moment of reception Propst Grüber asked me, as chairman of the Commission, whether he might have opportunity to thank the King for the care which Denmark had given to nearly 200,000 German war fugitives from the Baltic ports, who reached Copenhagen in 1945 while Denmark was still under Nazi occupation. King Christian, despite manifest physical weakness, graciously assented to the request which I ventured to make. What followed is surely significant at this hour. Propst Grüber, speaking in German, said:

'I am deeply moved by having the honour of being received today by your Majesty. Being the first German allowed to appear before your Majesty after the collapse, it is my heartfeal duty to ask forgiveness, on behalf of my nation, for all that my nation has inflicted on the Danish nation, and of which I know I bear my share of guilt. This guilt is indeed so great that men alone cannot bear and men alone cannot forgive it. It was with a heavy heart that I came to Denmark, but also with a confident heart, knowing that I was allowed to come as a Christian to fellow-Christians. I also beg to give

"3.- This union is to commence all since the commit there solves to the Church, so a though they might have known to world up international relations through other organisations.

"4.- Through this union the communities shall be strengthened and the unity of the Church shall be made more and more apparent to a world which is gradually turning away from God.

"4.- This unity of the Church, youth of different nations shall be proclaimed through the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches and it is to be hoped that when its constitution is finally ratified the Churches will appoint representations of their most active Youth Organisations on its staff.

"The representatives of the Church Youth Organisations know their special obligation at tackling the urgent problems of our time and are fully aware that their solution can only be achieved with the help of the Churches."

The Swiss Council of Church Youth gave an invitation for similar conference to meet in the Spring of 1948 and various practical plans for exchange of literature, invitations, etc. were discussed.

E.H.B. Scheve

REMARK — A Tribute to the Late King Christian

The Gov. Army Quarter, Quarters of the Prison Commission of the World Council of Churches, which held its last meeting in Copenhagen (see E.P.S.No.15) and the delegates of the Commission were received by the late King Christian X. Dr. Oertzen, in an open letter to "The Times" (London, April 25, 1947) writes:

"The audience, probably the last accorded by his Majesty to foreign visitors, was marked by an incident which it seems appropriate to record in this time of general commemoration of the King's devotion to the common good. One of our four representatives was Pastor Grüber (of Germany), who was liberated from Dachau concentration camp by the Allies and is now a member of the Berlin Town Council. As we assisted the moment of a reception Pastor Grüber asked me, as chairman of the Commission, whether he might have opportunity to thank the King for the care which Denmark had given to nearly 200,000 German war fugitives from the Baltic ports, who reached Copenhagen in 1945 while Denmark was still under Nazi occupation. King Christian, despite particular physical weakness, graciously listened to the request which I ventured to make. What followed is scarcely conceivable at this hour. Cannot another, speaking in German, say:

'I am deeply moved by having the honour of being received today by your Majesty. During the first months allowed to a man today your Majesty after the collapse, it is my honoured duty to ask forgiveness, on behalf of my nation, for all that my nation has done against the Danish nation, and of which I know I bear my share of guilt. This guilt is indeed so great that man alone cannot bear and God alone cannot forgive it. It was with a heavy heart that I came to Denmark, but also with a confident heart, knowing that I was allowed to come as a Christian to fellow-Christians. I also had to give

expression to the grateful feelings all of us have for all that has been done by the Danish Government and the Danish nation for the homeless people. We well appreciate the difficulties involved in this work. I may humbly ask you to accept, with these thanks, the assurance that the men who are now bearing responsibility in nation and Church in Germany, are firmly resolved to repair the sufferings brought into the world, and we request you to have confidence in these men who are of good will. We need, all of us, individuals as well as nations, forgiveness, and we should like to remain united with the men to whom we have done wrong, in praying: Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.'

"King Christian, who answered in German, said, 'I believe you are sincere, and that it is from your heart and not only from your lips'. Then, turning to us, he said in English, 'Are there many more Germans like him?' I replied, 'There are many leaders of the German Evangelical Church, your Majesty, who would say and mean the same'. The King, with a smile, said, 'Then I must tell my Foreign Minister that they can come and see me'." E.P.S. Geneva

U.S.S.R. A Significant Statement

A statement of the Presidium of the United Council of the Baptist and Evangelical Christians of the U.S.S.R. issued during the second half of 1946, addressed to the members of its constituency has now found its way to Geneva. The statement which is signed by the chairman of the Council, Y. Zhidkov, the two vice-chairmen, the treasurer and the general secretary, gives a survey on this important Protestant group in Soviet Russia.

Witness to Christian Unity.- Speaking of the three constituent bodies of the Council, the Baptist, the Evangelical Christians and the Pentecostals, "who share the Baptist religious principles of resurrection and baptism", the statement affirms that they all share in harmonious work of the Kingdom of God in their beloved land. "We fervently thank the Lord for being able to carry out His sacred desire 'That all may be one' and we would like to see this wish of His for unity among His children become close and dear to all Christian Churches throughout the world."

The Preaching of the Pure Gospel.- The entire Protestant brotherhood painstakingly preserves the purity of the Evangelistic and Evangelical teaching. "The complete Gospel", they say, "is our doctrine."

The Preaching of Sanctification.- The spiritual depth, purity and sanctity of the Churches and their members - "this is what occupies first place in our educational work. We do not strive for numbers, although we take joy in the conversion of every sinner. Figures interest us very little, and we are not especially concerned with statistics of our members... It seems to us that in many countries Christianity suffers with the restless spirit of Martha. We inculcate among our members the spirit of Mary - that is, the spirit of deep, meditative Christianity, which is acquired by her stay at the feet of Christ."

The Spirit of Early Christianity.- "The simplicity of the early days of Christianity is our ideal, and we strive for it in all our life and work... Most of our blessings we received not in luxurious and costly houses of prayer but in simple rooms of the type of the Jerusalem chamber... We pray unceasingly that our Russian Evangelical Churches may not deviate from the simplicity of early Christianity."

Carry on God's Work with our own Means.- "It is our principle to carry on God's work in our country with our own means. The observance of this rule has developed in our Russian Churches the spirit of selfless physical service. Our brothers and sisters have learned to sacrifice not only everything within their power, but even beyond their power. In this respect our Churches resemble the Macedonian Churches. The generosity of our believers finds expression in large offerings which cover all the needs of the work of God in our country."

Religious Freedom.- The statement then affirms that the Protestant group in the U.S.S.R. has "complete religious freedom to carry out its activity day after day. Because of this freedom we have a flourishing spiritual life in our Churches. There is a great fire that burns in the hearts of our believers. The Gospels are preached freely, and thousands of sinners repent and turn to Christ. There is not a single Church of ours which does not have its conversions. We have information that during the first half of the summer 1946 already thirty thousand newly converted souls were baptised."

A journal "Bratsky Vestnik" (Brotherly News), the Bible, the New Testament and books of spiritual songs are being published and "we shall continue to publish these until we have satisfied all need for this material."

The Baptist and Evangelical Christians are also doing a charitable work. "Regular monthly offerings are made in all our Churches for the children of soldiers who died during the war. These offerings provide large funds."

The statement closes with these words: "Accept this letter of ours as fraternal news of those who love you and pray for you, your brothers and sisters in the belief in Jesus Christ, who are scattered over the boundless expanses of our Soviet Union."

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANY

The Reformed League and the Reorganisation of the E.K.D.

On March 14, 1947 the "Moderamen of the Reformed League of Germany" met in Detmold, and dealt with a series of questions relating to the envisaged order of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD).

With regard to the confessional Conventions, the Moderamen considers a settlement on the following lines to be the only possible one: "The Synods are to decide, as the head of the Church, in all matters with the Synodals of all confessions.

"The Synodal members of the separate confessions can come together during the Synodal discussions for special discussions (conventions). If a consideration is made valid by its basis on Holy

Scripture, the decision can only be supported by the mutual recognition of God's Word through brotherly discussion. A mere reference to the formulation of a confessional writing or a confessional tradition is inadequate in the Church of the Word."

This basis drawn up for the Synods was also applied to the future Church meeting of the E.K.D. in a special declaration. The question was faced, whether every confessional Convention is to have a right of veto. "According to this procedure, if the Convention so decides in particular cases the Church Assembly is forbidden to listen together to Holy Scripture and to pray that they may receive a common word for the E.K.D. as that received at Barmen. But the exclusion of this possibility in advance by a standing order means the assumption that the authority of Holy Scripture does not apply to the Church Assembly as such, means curtailing the freedom and authority of Holy Scripture by the confession."

The Moderamen also dealt with "the recent attempts at basing the unity of the E.K.D. on the Augsburg Confession" and reached the following resolution: "The Augsburg Confession has never been valid in important sections of the Reformed Church in Germany. Apart from the Reformed Churches of Lower Hesse, the Augsburg Confession is in practice a Lutheran Confessional statement which can be interpreted in the Reformed sense, but in this case must be subjected to modifications (article 10). In any case it is not a symbolic book which is binding on the confessional groups of the E.K.D.

"It is not possible for the Reformed Churches to raise the Augsburg Confession now to the status of a symbolic book which is binding on all (as we are asked to do), because of their confessional divergency from the Confessio Augustana and also because of the limitations set by their own history and origin."

Finally it is explained in a further statement on the draft of the Constitution of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (VELKD) (see E.P.S. No. 13/14): "When the unity of the German Evangelical Church was in mortal danger during the years behind us, Lutherans, Reformed and United were at one in confessing Jesus Christ as the one Word of God which we have to listen to, and which we have to trust and to obey in life and in death. Thus the one link became visible which holds together the Evangelical Church in Germany as the league of the Confessing Churches.

"Since then the Declaration of Barmen is the 'unavoidable theological basis' of the Evangelical Church in Germany.

"The draft for the constitution of the VELKD which has now been published avoids this theological basis of the Evangelical Church in Germany. It does not say a word about it, nor does it recognise in any other way that it is in accordance with the Declaration. Rather does the draft stand in direct opposition to that Declaration."

E.P.S. Geneva

Just as this issue was ready to be mailed the following reports from the meeting of the Provisional Committee at Buckhill Falls, Pa., U.S.A. were received. Because of their importance they are being added immediately to this issue.

1. General Statement from Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches

The meeting of the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches held at Buckhill Falls (April 22nd to 25th) - probably the last meeting of the full committee before the World Council is officially constituted at the 1948 Assembly - was attended by 35 members from 15 countries. The committee reviewed the work of the eleven departments of the World Council and took important decisions with regard to the first Assembly, the membership of the Council and the relationships with the International Missionary Council.

It was decided that the Assembly should meet at Amsterdam from August 22nd to September 5th 1948. In a "call to the churches" the desire is expressed that the Assembly will focus its attention on the rebirth of the Churches and re-dedication in the unity of the faith. The morning sessions will be devoted to the discussion of the main themes; the afternoon sessions to the questions of constitution, programme and policy of the Council. The Assembly will be attended by 450 official delegates and by a limited number of consultants and representatives of youth. About 600 visitors will be admitted to the plenary sessions.

The Committee expressed its satisfaction that a number of the Eastern Orthodox Churches had already decided to be officially represented at the Assembly, and expressed the hope that representatives of the World Council will soon be able to enter into full conference with representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate and decided to send delegations to other Orthodox Churches in the Balkan countries. Metropolitan Theophilus of the Russian Orthodox Church in America and Metropolitan Athenagoras of the Greek Orthodox Church in America visited Buckhill Falls to confer with World Council leaders.

The Committee was attended by four of its members from the younger Churches. It was decided to invite a considerable number of younger churches in addition to those already invited. The present total of churches which have accepted is 105. Considerable advance was also made in relating the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches to each other. The report of the joint Committee of these two bodies including the proposal to create a common Eastern office in Asia was unanimously adopted.

2. A Call to the Churches concerning The First Assembly of The World Council of Churches, Amsterdam, 1948

I.

In August 1948 the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches will take place at Amsterdam, and all the member Churches will send their delegates. We are profoundly thankful that after long years of separation, and so soon after the most devastating war in human history, the Christian Churches throughout the world will thus be able to express and to manifest their spiritual unity.

We know that this is due to no merit of our own, but is a gift, granted to the Christian Churches by our Lord Himself against and beyond any human hope. Through the trials and persecutions of these last years, a new consciousness of fellowship has been awakened and made effective, and a flood of prayer has been released, overflowing all ecclesiastical barriers and national antagonisms. We have learned in a new way that "where one member suffers, all the members suffer with it." And we have been richly blessed by this experience. Thus we have every reason to thank and praise God, "Who only doeth wondrous things."

But this graciousness of God reminds us all both of our responsibility and of our shortcomings. The main theme before the Assembly - "Man's Disorder and God's Design" - itself shows that the Churches of Christ have failed in preventing man's disorder, and will fail again, if we try to overcome it without God's grace, and without a renewal of our own lives. We have fallen short both in speaking the Word of Christ and in doing His healing and saving work.

II.

With the blessing of God, this Assembly can mark a new experience of the glory of God, and a new acceptance by Christians and Christian Churches of their responsibility for seeking continually to bring the whole of human life and relations under the Kingship of Christ. But before attempting to make a new start, we ought to understand why we failed, and recognizing the cause of our failure, plead that the goodness of God may lead us to true repentance. The design of God declares itself in the new environment for our lives that has been created by the acts of God in Christ. In His life, death, and resurrection, and in the coming of the Church, a new beginning has been made in human history. "What is old has gone, the new has come." But at this crisis in the existence of mankind, we are compelled to confess that the contrast between the high calling of the Church and the visible institutions called Churches is only too evident. We have failed because we ourselves have been partakers in man's disorder. Our first and deepest need is not new organization, but the renewal, or rather the rebirth, of the actual Churches. May God grant that we may hear the call of the Spirit.

III.

We confess that because of the dividedness of the Churches, also, we have fallen short in the witness we should have borne to Christ. Our Churches are divided, and by their divisions the whole work of the Church, both in speech and in action, suffers most grievous harm. We long for the day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall recapture the Churches and, manifesting His glory, lead them to speak with one clear voice and to act as those who serve Him only as their Lord. In that unity we desire to join our forces to do His work of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the prisoner and healing the sick, to learn and to preach His truth and grace, and thus to proclaim His Kingdom.

IV.

The World Council of Churches is itself both a declaration of the spiritual unity of its member Churches and a means through which they may express that unity in action. Already more than a hundred Churches have joined it from the Old and New Worlds, from the East and the West - a clear sign of the longing of the Churches for deeper fellowship in Christ. The Council stands on faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour and is a fellowship of Churches which accept that faith. It serves the Churches, and in no way seeks to legislate for them or control them. It aspires after an expression of unity in which Christians and Christian Churches, joyously aware of their oneness in Jesus Christ their Lord, and pursuing an ever fuller realization of union, shall in time of need give help and comfort to one another, and at all times inspire and exhort one another to live worthily of their common membership in the Body of Christ. It also seeks increasingly to enable the Churches to take united action for the furtherance of Christ's Kingdom. We trust that, by God's Grace, through the meetings at Amsterdam, the World Council may be recognized by the whole membership of the constituent Churches as a clear expression and a powerful instrument of their fellowship.

We therefore call upon all Christians to join us in earnest prayer that the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches may be used of God for a rebirth of the Churches, and for their re-dedication in the unity of the faith to the common task of proclaiming His Word and doing His work among all nations.

3. The following Statement was adopted by the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches at its meeting at Buckhill Falls on April 25th, 1947.

The World Council of Churches, composed of Churches which acknowledge Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, owes its existence to the desire of its member Churches to express their unity in Him. The Council seeks to promote this unity amongs its members and to serve them as an organ whereby they may bear witness together to their common faith and co-operate in matters requiring united action. The Council does not aim, however, to usurp the functions which belong to its constituent members, nor in any way to con-

trol or legislate for these bodies. Moreoever, while earnestly seeking the co-operation and unity of all the Churches that accept its basis, the Council disavows any thought of becoming a single unified church structure dominated by a centralized administrative authority.

The Christian unity for which the Council stands is of a different order. It strives after a unity in which Christians and Christian churches, joyously aware of their oneness in Jesus Christ their Lord, and pursuing an ever fuller realization and expression of that oneness, shall in times of need give help and comfort to one another, and at all times inspire and exhort one another to live worthily of their common membership in the Body of Christ.

With respect to public pronouncements, the Council regards it as an essential part of its responsibility to address its own attention in the realm of thought or action, "not as having dominion of their faith, but as helpers of their joy." The Council further considers itself responsible to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, to seek to know the Will of God upon important issues which radically affect the Church and society, and thereafter, in the name of Christ, in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, and in penitence and faith, to call upon Churches, governments or men in general, as the situation may require, to deal with a given historical issue, in the name of Christ and in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ the Lord.

E.P.S. Geneva.

U.S.A. The late Bishop Perry

The death of Bishop Dr. James DeWolf Perry, the former presiding bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. has been deeply felt in many countries. The different churches have expressed their regrets in appreciative descriptions of his life published in their respective papers.

The Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. has lost in him a leader of international standing. Dr. Perry received international attention in 1933, when as Presiding Bishop he led a commission to the Orient to study missions there. Upon his return he challenged the adequacy of the report, "Rethinking Missions", which had been published the previous year by the Laymen's Foreign Mission Inquiry, a commission financed by Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jn. Dr. Perry declared that the criticism of the inquiry had been unfair and hasty.

Another great work of Bishop Perry's that will always be remembered is in the realm of the reunion of Christendom. His interest in this work led to his appointment as vice-president and chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commission on Faith and Order. While concerned with all efforts toward reunion, Bishop Perry was particularly active in negotiations with different branches of the Eastern Orthodox Church. In addition to other means of acquiring exact information and maintaining cordial relations, he had the help of his Committee on Ecclesiastical Relations, appointed by himself as Presiding Bishop.

E.P.S. Geneva.